

Alafat, Beth

From: LeClair, Jacqueline
Sent: Tuesday, January 07, 2020 1:44 PM
To: Marsh, Michael; Alafat, Beth
Subject: FW: News Clips, Thursday, Jan 2, 2019

Jacqueline LeClair
Chief, Wetlands Protection Section
USEPA
5 Post Office Sq. Mailcode 06-2
Boston, MA 02109
tel: 617-918-1549
cell: 857-243-0811

From: LeClair, Jacqueline
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2020 6:05 PM
To: Wintrob, Paul <Wintrob.Paul@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: News Clips, Thursday, Jan 2, 2019

Happy New Year Paul! Wishing you and your family all the best in 2020!!

Jacqueline LeClair
Chief, Wetlands Protection Section
USEPA
5 Post Office Sq Mailcode 06-2
Boston, MA 02109
tel: 617-918-1549
cell: 857-243-0811

On Jan 2, 2020, at 8:58 AM, Wintrob, Paul <Wintrob.Paul@epa.gov> wrote:

Happy New Year! Hope 2020 is a great year for you!



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Funding approved for PFAS cleanup Officials say new federal money is just one step in addressing the chemicals

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...includes an estimated \$295 million for cleanup, testing and new **drinking water** standards for the potentially dangerous chemical...

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Another regulator signals approval of controversial CMP hydropower project

Bangor Daily News | 12/31/2019

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After a contentious year of debates over its merits and potential environmental impact, Central Maine Power's proposed \$1 billion hydropower project looks set to gain another key regulatory approval, possibly as early as January.

On Monday, staff of the state's Land Use Planning Commission released a 34-page draft recommendation and a memo to commissioners and intervening parties that proposed approving CMP's use of land for its controversial New England Clean Energy Connect project, which would pipe hydroelectricity from Canada to Massachusetts through Maine.

The draft recommendation said CMP's project overall complies with the commission's land-use standards, although it requires CMP to remove and in some cases add vegetation, assure emergency vehicles can get into the planned hydropower corridor and get applicable construction permits.

It is the second regulator, behind the Maine Public Utilities Commission, to consider a permit for the project. The public utilities commission granted its permit in April.

"The next step is for the commissioners to deliberate for a possible vote on a decision at the Jan. 8 meeting," said Bill Hinkel, the commission's regional supervisor, who penned the Dec. 30 memo.

[iframe url="<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6594614-slc9-Memo-Draft-Decision-Document.html>" responsive=true height="550" width="400"]

The draft recommendation met with disapproval from some who oppose the CMP project.

"We are extremely disappointed in the LUPC staff's recommendation as it devalues the importance of preserving Maine's natural, scenic, and recreational resources of the Kennebec River and National Scenic Appalachian Trail in particular, which are the focus of this permit review," said Sandi Howard, director of the grassroots Say NO to NECEC group and co-leader of an initiative to bring the proposed CMP corridor to a statewide vote on the November 2020 ballot.

Howard said the draft recommendation reflects politics in Augusta. Gov. Janet Mills supports the project, although her hometown of Farmington in March voted to rescind an earlier letter of support for it.

"This is exactly why the people of Maine need to force a statewide vote to block the corridor," she said. "It's our best shot at protecting the future of our state."

"The NECEC remains on schedule to complete permitting and start construction in 2020 and to begin commercial operation in December 2022," said Thorn Dickinson, vice president of business development at Avangrid, the parent company of CMP. "While we are looking forward to the hearing in January, we will refrain from making any comment until a final decision is made."

The Land Use Planning Commission itself quibbled over the project and to what degree it might disturb remote lands and fishing sites in Maine.

In September, the commission failed to agree on granting a site law certification for the project to CMP. The commission's chairman, Everett Worcester, said at the time that the commissioners were close to agreeing on exceptions for the lines at the Kennebec River and Appalachian Trail, but remained deadlocked on Beattie Pond, a fishery that is protected.

Shortly after the meeting CMP asked the commission to amend its application to re-route the line from Beattie Pond to Merrill Strip Township, where it would be allowed with a permit. The move will add \$1 million to the project.

The Land Use Planning Commission oversees the Unorganized Territory, the area of Maine where there are no incorporated municipal governments.

The commission is a nine-member board composed of county and gubernatorial appointees. It needs five votes to pass or deny any request.

In turn, its decision would certify to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection whether the CMP project is an allowed use within the areas where it is proposed. The DEP will consider the commission's recommendations within its own decision.

The commission is the second regulator, behind the Maine Public Utilities Commission, to consider a permit. The public utilities commission granted its permit in April.

Another key approval, for energy contracts, came from the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities in June.

The other required approvals for the CMP project are a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wetlands permit, an **ISO New England** section 1.3.9 approval and a U.S. Department of Energy presidential permit.

Municipal approvals also are required for construction of project components such as substations and transmission structures. The type and number of permits will vary, depending on location.

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Scientists: Northeast warms faster than rest of country

Burlington Free Press | 12/31/2019

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For one scientist, **climate change** in the Northeast announces itself in the abnormal appearances of warm-water fish - an abundance of mahi-mahi and unprecedented sightings in January of Gulf Stream flounder and juvenile black sea bass in shallow waters off New England.

"Nobody had ever seen that before," said Glen Gawarkiewicz, an oceanographer from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in **Massachusetts**.

For another scientist, the phenomenon materializes in ocean temperatures, which have been rising for more than a generation, influencing coastal weather and pushing snowfall farther inland.

"Our winters now are not like our winters before," said Lenny Giuliano, the state meteorologist in **Rhode Island**.

As water temperatures rise in the Atlantic Ocean and its connected gulfs and bays, the warmth may spread inland and generate temperature variations at the county level.

The water-to-land effect appears along the Great Lakes, which also are warming, said Mark Wysocki, New York state climatologist and a professor at Cornell University.

"There's a very strong connection," Wysocki said.

Though the Southwest saw the greatest rise in average air temperatures during the past five decades, data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows the Northeast warmed the most over both longer and shorter time spans.

Nowhere more so than **Rhode Island**: The state's average temperature has increased 3.64 degrees compared with its 20th-century norm, according to NOAA records dating back to 1895.

Other states trail closely: New Jersey came in 3.49 degrees warmer; **Connecticut**, 3.22; **Maine**, 3.17; **Massachusetts**, 3.05; and **New Hampshire**, 2.93.

States could be seeing a "troughing" effect, in which cold air drops from the north and draws warmer air up the coast, said David Robinson, the New Jersey state climatologist at Rutgers University.

Such an effect caused 50 mph wind gusts on Halloween night in New Jersey, Robinson said. He linked it to a tornado in Morris County, about 25 miles west of New York City.

Wysocki points to a naturally occurring shift in an air pattern called the North Atlantic Oscillation, which can play a role in air temperatures in the Northeast.

Many agree that water temperatures probably play a role.

"You see so much variability in temperature over land throughout the year," said Ambarish Karmalkar, a climate researcher at the University of **Massachusetts** and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center. "Variability over the ocean is much smaller. ... It takes much longer to warm the ocean, and takes much longer to cool it."

Though researchers said the dynamic hasn't fully been studied, NOAA data shows the effect down to the county level.

Over the past five years, the four **Connecticut** counties hugging the coastline averaged 2.9 degrees warmer than normal, compared with 2.6 degrees for the four inland counties.

In **Rhode Island**, a half-degree difference separated Washington County on the coast and Providence County in the north.

In **Massachusetts**, temperatures in Nantucket and Boston registered nearly a full degree higher than average compared with inland areas around the town of Amherst in Hampshire County.

Differences of 1 or more degrees separated Wicomico County on Maryland's Delmarva Peninsula from the interior of the state, as well as Philadelphia from the Allegheny Mountains and downstate New York from the Adirondacks.

It's even more amplified in Pennsylvania and New York where mountain ranges act as natural barriers, blocking warmer air coming from the coast.

"It's hard for a marine climate to move far inland," Wysocki said.

Counties along the **New Hampshire** and **Maine** coastlines lack any clear pattern.

Maine as a whole hovered 1.9 degrees above average during that five-year time span - the middle of the pack among all states.

But five years is too small a window to observe definitive conclusions, said Sean Birkel, **Maine's** state climatologist and a professor at the University of **Maine**.

One conclusion has emerged among the regions' scientists: The Atlantic Ocean is warming, and dramatically so.

Gawarkiewicz studies the area of the Atlantic where the shallower waters of the continental shelf slide into the depths of the ocean.

This area acts as a two-lane highway where cold waters from Canada and Greenland slip south closer to shore while tropical waters pulled by the Gulf Stream pass north farther out to sea.

Over the past decade, an "extraordinary" change has hit the Gulf Stream, causing its path to become unstable, wobbling off the normal course and often bringing warmer waters nearer to shore, Gawarkiewicz said.

The stream emits more "warm core rings" - eddies of water up to 60 miles wide that spin toward land and can hold warm temperatures for months. Along the way, the rings can increase water temperatures in a given area as much as 12 degrees above average.

Gawarkiewicz pointed to a University of **Massachusetts** study showing such rings have spiked from about 18 annually before the new millennium to 33 annually now. Researchers tracked three of them in August and found they increased water temperature 5.5 degrees in the Georges Bank, an area of the continental shelf off **Massachusetts** that is larger than the state itself.

Other warming hot spots have hit locations such as Block Island, a 9-square-mile destination for vacationers and wildlife near the **Rhode Island** coast.

"They were catching Gulf Stream fish off Block Island in January," Gawarkiewicz said.

Researchers suspect the rings play a role in the unusually high number of dead humpback whales along the Atlantic coast the past few years, Gawarkiewicz said.

Though scientists preliminarily concluded they died from ship strikes and fishing gear entanglement, they don't know why it's happening more frequently. Warming waters offer one possibility, as they could draw the whales closer to busier coastlines.

In general, climatologists and other researchers in the Northeast said that although there's no doubt global **climate change** drives warmer air and water temperatures overall, there's still much to learn about the interaction between the two. Among the most important inquiries is determining what's here to stay and what will change with the wind.

"What is the future going to look like with (changing) patterns?" Wysocki said. "And for how long do they kind of lock themselves in?"

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Leachate Spill Did Not Reach Black River, DEC Official Says

The Caledonian-Record | 12/31/2019

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COVENTRY — An estimated 8,000 gallons of leachate from the landfill in Coventry spilled from a breached tanker truck early Friday morning in an accident that left one man seriously injured.

The leachate, liquid that is drained from within the liners of the landfill on Airport Road, contaminated soils around Route 5 where the accident occurred but did not reach the nearby Black River, said Shawn Donovan, spill manager for the **Vermont** Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Our observation was that it did not reach the river," Donovan said.

The accident involving two truck units occurred early Friday morning during an ice storm.

Jean Paul Lamoureux, 64, of Newport City was taken to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., where he was reported in stable condition as of Saturday, according to a hospital spokeswoman.

Donovan said Monday that the company hired by the state was still doing clean up, removing contaminated soils from the accident scene.

The soils would be taken back to the landfill, Donovan said.

There was a very small amount of leachate still in the breached tanker, he said.

Soil samples around the spill site would be collected and tested. There was also spill of oils and **diesel** fuel from the damaged truck.

The state will do a study of the soil samples to determine if more cleanup work is necessary, depending on what kind of chemicals are present.

John Gay, engineer for Casella which owns the landfill, said in a voice mail message that the leachate is not toxic.

Donovan said he and the team observed several well heads in the area but did not see any spilled material near them.

He said that anyone with concerns about their well water should contact the **Vermont** Department of Health or his waste management and prevention division at DEC.

The accident is the subject of a **Vermont** State Police investigation.

Lt. Walt Smith, head of the Derby state police barracks, said Monday morning he did not have all the details to comment on the nature of the investigation at that time.

The tractor trailer with the leachate load left the landfill on Airport Road and was southbound on Route 5 when it struck another truck hauling an empty garbage trailer that had slid on icy roads into Route 5 at about 3 a.m. Friday, state police said.

Both vehicles were MBI trucks, a company that handles garbage across the country. Gay said Casella does not own or operate the trucks involved, Gay said.

The driver of the garbage truck was outside his truck, putting out warning signs, and was hit when the tanker truck hit his disabled tractor trailer unit.

The leachate truck driver was not injured.

The accident closed Route 5 and the access to Route 14, the local truck route around Newport City, until mid-day Friday when the road opened for one lane. The road opened fully by mid-afternoon.

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Funding approved for PFAS cleanup Officials say new federal money is just one step in addressing the chemicals

The Hartford Courant | 12/31/2019

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New federal budget legislation includes an estimated \$295 million for cleanup, testing and new **drinking water** standards for the potentially dangerous chemical pollutant known as **PFAS**, but officials warned Monday far more will be needed.

U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said **Connecticut** could be eligible for a share of that funding to help cover cleanup and testing for known **PFAS pollution** in the Farmington River, at landfills and **drinking water** wells around the state.

Ann Hulick, **Connecticut** director for the environmental group Clean Water Action, said state officials have told her that they will need at least \$1 million in 2020 and much more money in the future for testing, cleanup and monitoring of **PFAS** contamination in this state.

"This is just the end of the beginning," Blumenthal said at a news conference at Windsor Town Hall, paraphrasing a famous line by Winston Churchill. "There is still a ton of work to be done."

The federal budget bill just signed into law will require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to report back to Congress within 60 days with a plan for creating tough new **PFAS drinking water** standards. But the EPA has been considering such new standards for years and has yet to declare **PFAS** a "hazardous substance" under federal law.

"There is no assurance the EPA will do the right thing," Blumenthal said of President Trump's environmental agency. "We will watch them like a hawk," Blumenthal said.

PFAS stands for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds and these man-made chemicals are used in everything from firefighting foam to non-stick cookware and food packaging. Research has linked **PFAS** to various types of cancer, immune system issues, reproductive and childhood development problems, high cholesterol, diabetes and other health concerns.

These types of pollutants can cause serious health problems even at tiny levels. The current federal advisory is that there should be no more than 70 parts per trillion of **PFAS** compounds in **drinking water**, but several states have set much tougher standards.

Scientists have nicknamed **PFAS** "forever chemicals" because of the way they persist in the human body and the environment, and this pollutant has become a national issue in recent years. Initially created in the 1940s, state experts say **PFAS pollution** could be leaking into ground- and **drinking water** from closed landfills all over **Connecticut**.

Multiple releases of firefighting foam containing **PFAS** at Bradley International Airport in June and October flowed into the Farmington River in Windsor. Tests revealed high levels of the pollutant in **drinking water** wells in Greenwich, Willimantic and Enfield.

A special task force created by Gov. Ned Lamont is calling for widespread, mandatory **PFAS** testing of **drinking water** systems and wells, around closed landfills, industrial sites where the chemicals were employed, and near airports and firefighting stations that use **PFAS** foam to combat fuel fires.

Hulick said state officials and environmental activists "are quickly learning the costs of that plan" for combatting this type of chemical **pollution**. She said it is clear that the type of testing the state task force is recommending "takes millions of dollars."

"How big a problem is it? We really don't know yet," said Bill Lucey, this state's Long Island Soundkeeper. "That's a little bit frightening."

Hulick called passage of the new federal funding for **PFAS** "a huge step forward."

According to Blumenthal's staff, the appropriations legislation includes \$250 million for **PFAS** clean-up efforts, including \$10 million for related work at the federal Centers for Disease Control. An additional \$4 million has been allocated to the EPA to plan for and write tough new **drinking water** standards for **PFAS**.

Another \$20 million is in the budget for grants to help states write their own standards for these hazardous compounds, and nearly \$20 million more for other **PFAS**-related research and clean-up programs.

"The Trump administration will have to be persuaded" to accept the need for far tougher federal **drinking water** standards, Blumenthal said. He noted that **PFAS** is one issue that has broad bipartisan support in Congress.

The new legislation doesn't include a hard deadline for the EPA to approve stricter **drinking water** standards. "My expectation is that we should see those standards within a year," Blumenthal said.

Windsor resident Jane Oswecki took advantage of Monday's news conference to again urge state officials to improve public communication about **PFAS pollution** issues.

"We're awfully in the dark here," Oswecki said of the way many in Windsor feel as they wait for the results of state **PFAS** testing following the spills from Bradley Airport. "It's just not a very good situation."

Hulick said state officials "recognize this is a major gap" and are now seeking to improve communications on this **pollution** issue. "I think they've heard you and are working on it," she said.

Gregory B. Hladky can

be reached at ghladky@

courant.com

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State has \$750,000 clean-up plan for landfillsAfter group identified them as sources of water contamination

The Hartford Courant | 01/01/2020

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State environmental officials are planning to use \$750,000 in newly authorized funding for anti-**pollution** controls and improvements at five old state-supervised landfills, including two known to be leaking hazardous man-made chemicals known as **PFAS**.

The money will be used at closed landfills once operated by the former **Connecticut** Resources Recovery Authority in Hartford, Ellington, Waterbury, Wallingford and Shelton.

A state **PFAS** task force reported to Gov. Ned Lamon in November that landfills across the state are potential sources of ground- and drinking-**water contamination** from these man-made chemicals.

"We know landfills are absolutely a source of **PFAS** in the environment," said Raymond Frigon, assistant director of the state environmental remediation division.

Anne Hulick, **Connecticut** director of the environmental activist group Clean Water Action, said this week she's been told by state officials that they will need at least \$1 million in 2020 for testing and monitoring of **PFAS pollution**.

In December, the state Bond Commission allocated the new funding for improvements at all five landfills that would include "remediating erosion, replacing methane recovery systems, upgrading **wastewater** systems, and other related projects."

Tests at the former CRRA landfills in Hartford and Ellington have shown both old dumps are leaking high levels of **PFAS** chemicals into the groundwater. In Ellington, **drinking water** wells at two nearby homes were also found to have elevated levels of **PFAS**, and the state is supplying **drinking water** to one of the occupied homes.

The **PFAS** contaminants leaching out of the old Hartford landfill have also become part of a long-running legal dispute between the state and the MDC, which is responsible for treating the polluted water coming from the dump. The MDC has filed suit against the state in the \$5.8 million controversy, arguing in part that the state is responsible for any **PFAS** getting into water being treated at the MDC's **sewage** plant.

MDC officials claim the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has for years refused to pay proper sewer treatment fees for the leachate running off the Hartford landfill into the quasi-public agency's **sewage**

system.

Known as "forever chemicals," **PFAS** compounds have been linked to different types of cancers, immune system problems, reproductive and childhood development issues, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes.

Experts say these compounds are now extremely widespread because of their use in industrial processes, firefighting foam, non-stick cookware, cosmetics, stain-resistant carpeting and furniture, grease-resistant food packaging and other consumer products.

The state **PFAS** task force has recommended widespread testing and monitoring of closed landfills across the state.

DEEP's plans for the new \$750,000 in state funding include for improvements at the Hartford landfill, such as "repairs to the repairs to the groundwater control pumping system, repairs to the methane gas wellheads, repairs to the landfill cap, remediation erosion due to aging **stormwater** control systems," said agency spokeswoman Kristina Rozek.

Rozek said additional work at the Hartford dump would also include "repair or replacement of leachate collection tank, and groundwater treatment evaluation."

Scott W. Jellison, the MDC's chief executive officer, said this week DEEP hasn't informed the sewer agency of what type of work will be going on at the Hartford landfill. "We've not been notified," Jellison said.

Jellison said that, without knowing what work the DEEP will be doing to control **PFAS** leachate and groundwater from the landfill, he couldn't comment on whether the state's plans would impact the overall legal dispute.

At the Enfield landfill, DEEP officials said work would include continued provision of bottled water to homes where **PFAS** contamination was found in wells and design and installation of **drinking water** treatment systems.

Other improvements and/or repairs at former CRRA landfills in Waterbury, Shelton and Wallingford include fence installation and replacement, liner repairs and slope stabilization, and removal of trees and branches endangering power lines to pumping stations.

Gregory B. Hladky can be contacted at ghladky@courant.com

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City faces \$165K recycling fee

The Republican | 01/01/2020

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For the first time, the Holyoke faces having to pay for disposal of household recyclables. Despite the change, the City Council's Finance Committee on Monday recommended approving a contract with Waste Management.

Michael McManus, superintendent of the city's Department of Public Works, estimated the new fees would cost Holyoke \$165,000 yearly, based on a \$93.50 tonnage fee. The fee would increase by 2.5% annually.

Three companies bid for the state Department of Environmental Protection-initiated contract. Waste Management Recycle America was the winning bidder. The company currently oversees the Western **Massachusetts Recycling** program, which operates out of the Springfield Materials **Recycling** Facility at 84 Birnie Ave.

The state Department of Environmental Protection entered into a five-year agreement with Waste Management, which includes two five-year extension options. The contract would begin July 1, 2020, the start of fiscal 2021.

Holyoke operates on a dual-stream model, which separates trash and recyclables. Last year, 1,700 metric tons of recyclables were collected in Holyoke.

McManus said the city once made money off recyclables. But the recyclables market changed after China tightened and eventually blocked the importation of cheap and recyclable plastics.

The city is not obligated to sign the contract by the Jan. 31 deadline. McManus said his department would continue to seek disposal alternatives, but that the Waste Management contract is Holyoke's best option at this point.

Mayor Alex B. Morse opposes charging cities and towns for processing recyclable materials.

"This isn't just about Holyoke. Seventy cities and towns in Western **Massachusetts** are now being told that they need to foot the bill for **recycling**," Morse said in a statement. "This is happening throughout the country to ensure continued profits to the shareholders of Waste Management and the large oil and gas companies that make up the market for plastics."

The mayor attributed the rise to \$20 billion in federal subsidies to the oil and gas industries, and large plastics producers who "want to place the blame and responsibility on consumers," with a focus on plastic straw use. He added that lobbyists spend millions of dollars annually opposing legislation that would reduce waste at the source.

Morse, who is running for Congress, pledged to in the months ahead to seek alternatives and work with government officials and legislators to secure state assistance to offset the cost to communities of the contract.

The City Council must approve any contract that exceeds three years in length. City Councilor Joseph McGiverin, the Finance Committee chairman, said any renegotiation or contract extension should include input from the City Council.

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